

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1220

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1035

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS NO UK IC

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN-ICELAND FISHING AGREEMENT

1. NORWAY EXPECTS WITHIN TWO WEEKS TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH ICELAND WHICH WILL ESTABLISH CATCH LIMITATIONS FOR NORWEGIAN FISHING IN ICELAND'S 200-MILE FISHING ZONE. IT WILL REPLACE THEIR PREVIOUS AGREEMENT WHICH EXPIRED ON NOV. 13, 1975, AND WHICH PROVIDED FOR NORWEGIAN FISHING IN ICELAND'S PREVIOUS 50-MILE FISHING ZONE. ONLY NORWEGIAN LONG-LINE FISHING WILL BE PERMITTED. QUANTITIES WHICH WILL BE SMALL WILL BE SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION, ALTHOUGH ARNE TREHOLT, LOS MINISTER EVENSEN'S UNDER SECRETARY, TOLD E/C CONSELOR THAT NORWAY WOULD PROBABLY BE ALLOWED A TOTAL CATCH OF 2,000 TONS A YEAR, INCLUDING 500 TONS OF COD. TREHOLT SAID THAT THESE FIGURES WERE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AS IN PREVIOUS NORWEGIAN/ICELAND FISHING AGREEMENTS, AND COMMENTED THAT ICELAND ALSO FISHED OFF THE NORWEGIAN COAST.

2. DURING CONVERSATIONS WITH EVENSEN, DCM AND E/C COUNS RAISED QUESTION OF TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT. DCM POINTED OUT THAT ITS ANNOUNCEMENT MIGHT BE VIEWED WITH APPREHENSION BY THE BRITISH AT A TIME WHEN NORWAY WAS TRYING TO PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN RESOLVING COD WAR. EVENSEN REPLIED
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THAT WEST GERMANY AND BELGIUM HAD ALREADY CONCLUDED AGREEMENTS

WITH ICELAND FOR FISHING IN ITS 200-MILE ZONE AND THAT
NORWEGIAN FISHERMEN TRADITIONALLY FISHED IN THE WATERS
AROUND ICELAND DURING THE SPRING, BEGINNING ABOUT MARCH 1.
NORWAY HAD ALREADY RECOGNIZED ICELAND'S 200-MILE FISHING
LIMIT, AND IT WAS NECESSARY TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON NORWEGIAN
FISHING WITHIN THIS LIMIT BEFORE NORWEGIAN FISHING
BEGAN THERE. NORWAY THEREFORE HAD TO GO AHEAD WITH THE
AGREEMENT QUOTE TO PROTECT ITS FISHERMEN'S RIGHTS UNQTE.

3. COMMENT: EVENSEN'S COMMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING, THE ANNOUNCE-
MENT OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT AND POSSIBLE BRITISH REACTION TO IT,
COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT NORWAY'S ABILITY TO PLAY COLD WAR MIDDLE
MAN, ESPECIALLY IF THE ANNOUNCEMENT WERE TO COME AT A DELICATE
STAGE OF THE COD CRISIS.
BYRNE

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